

# Digital photography enhances BHI's radcon program

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What do photography and radiological protection have in common? They go hand-in-hand at several Environmental Restoration Contract projects led by Bechtel Hanford, Inc., to help employees get a good "picture" of the radiation and contamination levels in their work areas.

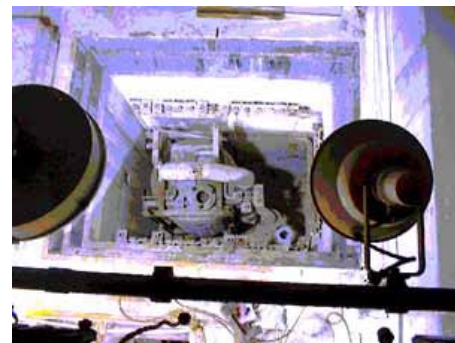
This innovative approach uses digital photos of work areas. It is being implemented to replace the standard hand-drawn maps with digital photos at the 233-S Plutonium Concentration Facility Decommissioning Project and the Surveillance/Maintenance and Surveillance Projects.

"The use of photos in our radiological survey program assists us in all aspects of performing radiological work," said Allen Nellesen, senior health physicist for BHI. "We can now provide our planning personnel and work crews with a very accurate and realistic view of the radiological conditions that will be encountered."

The digital photographs are tailored to meet the information needs of the employees. The photos can be as general as a large workspace or as specific as an individual piece of equipment. Radiological protection personnel insert the photos into a radiological survey form. Radiation and contamination levels are then superimposed on the photo.

Survey forms with photos provide a much better picture of the work area and become an integral part of the process of job preparation. "This is similar to the use of mock-ups of actual job sites to help employees become familiar with the work they are about to do," said Kevin Funke, radiological control technician supervisor for Thermo Hanford, Inc. "Using the photo surveys provides another tool to help us minimize radiation exposures and prevent personnel contaminations, thus helping to meet our ALARA goals."

The use of digital cameras might just be the first of many technological tools adopted by the radiological protection crews. They are also investigating the use of small hand-held computers, similar to those used by Federal Express and UPS delivery agents, to update radiological survey maps. ♦



Photos such as this one at the 233-S Plutonium Concentration Facility being decommissioned by the ERC team are becoming part of pre-job planning.

**CARING ABOUT COMMUNITY:** Department of Energy employees Felix Miera, left, and Marla Marvin put soap, water and elbow grease to work on a Columbia Basin Dive and Rescue vehicle. About 150 DOE employees of the Richland Operations Office and the Office of River Protection put in four hours of hard work on May 24 as part of DOE's second annual "Day of Caring" at 12 different United Way agencies. Projects ranged from small construction jobs and building maintenance to chores for senior citizens — 15 projects in all, for 14 non-profit agencies. Many of the employees used their own equipment and dug into their own pockets for needed supplies.

